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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/784,056	02/20/2004	Mark W. Thompson	P06711US0	6854
34082	7590	06/23/2005	EXAMINER	
ZARLEY LAW FIRM P.L.C. CAPITAL SQUARE 400 LOCUST, SUITE 200 DES MOINES, IA 50309-2350			WATTS, DOUGLAS D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3724	

DATE MAILED: 06/23/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	10/784,056	THOMPSON, MARK W.
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Douglas D. Watts	3724

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

1)  Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 March 2005.

2a)  This action is **FINAL**.                            2b)  This action is non-final.

3)  Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

4)  Claim(s) 1-9 and 11-16 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

6)  Claim(s) 1-9, 11-16 is/are rejected.

7)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

9)  The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)  The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a)  accepted or b)  objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)  The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a)  All b)  Some \* c)  None of:  
1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1)  Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2)  Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3)  Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/21/04.

4)  Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.  
5)  Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)  
6)  Other: \_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

In view of the brief filed on 3/25/05, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED.

New grounds of rejection are set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

- (1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,
- (2) request reinstatement of the appeal.

If reinstatement of the appeal is requested, such request must be accompanied by a supplemental appeal brief, but no new amendments, affidavits (37 CFR 1.130, 1.131 or 1.132) or other evidence are permitted. See 37 CFR 1.193(b)(2).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Bridgers (D373,712).

Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Watkins (6,324,765).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6-7, 9, 13, 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blevins (6,327,782) in view of Wright (5,107,665). Wright shows a guard with an adjustment slot for setting the distance between the guard and the cutting head. Such an adjustment would be useful with the Blevins device to allow for a larger or smaller cutting radius. Thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to add such an adjustment to the device of Blevins as in Wright to adjust the cutting radius. An equivalent structure would be a series of holes in place of the slot.

Claims 1, 4-5, 11-12, 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Belvins (6,327,782). Belvins shows a guard with a means to adjust the angle thereof relative to the support shaft. Obviously one of ordinary skill in the art would adjust the angle between the shaft and guard to be 90 degrees.

*2v-4*  
Claims 6, 8/rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridgers (D373,712) in view of Watkins (6,324,765). Watkins shows a telescoping shaft for a guard mounted to a grass trimmer. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to add such an adjustment device as in Watkins to the Bridgers cutter to avoid obstacles.

Claims 11, 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bridgers in view of Blevins. Blevins shows a flexible shield. The guard absorbs debris that is thrown out by the rotary cutting head. The guard is considered durable. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to add such a guard as in Belvins to the device of Bridgers for a more durable and shock absorbant shield.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Douglas Watts whose telephone number is (571) 272-4515. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 8:30AM – 4:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Allan Shoap can be reached on (571) 272-4514. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DW

6/9/05

*ay*

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*Douglas D. Watts*

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